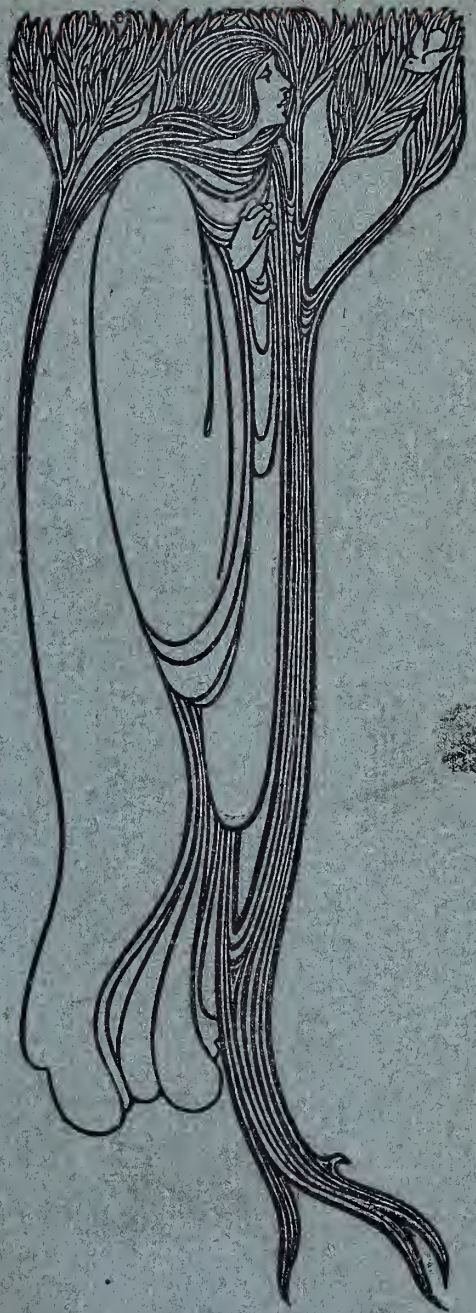
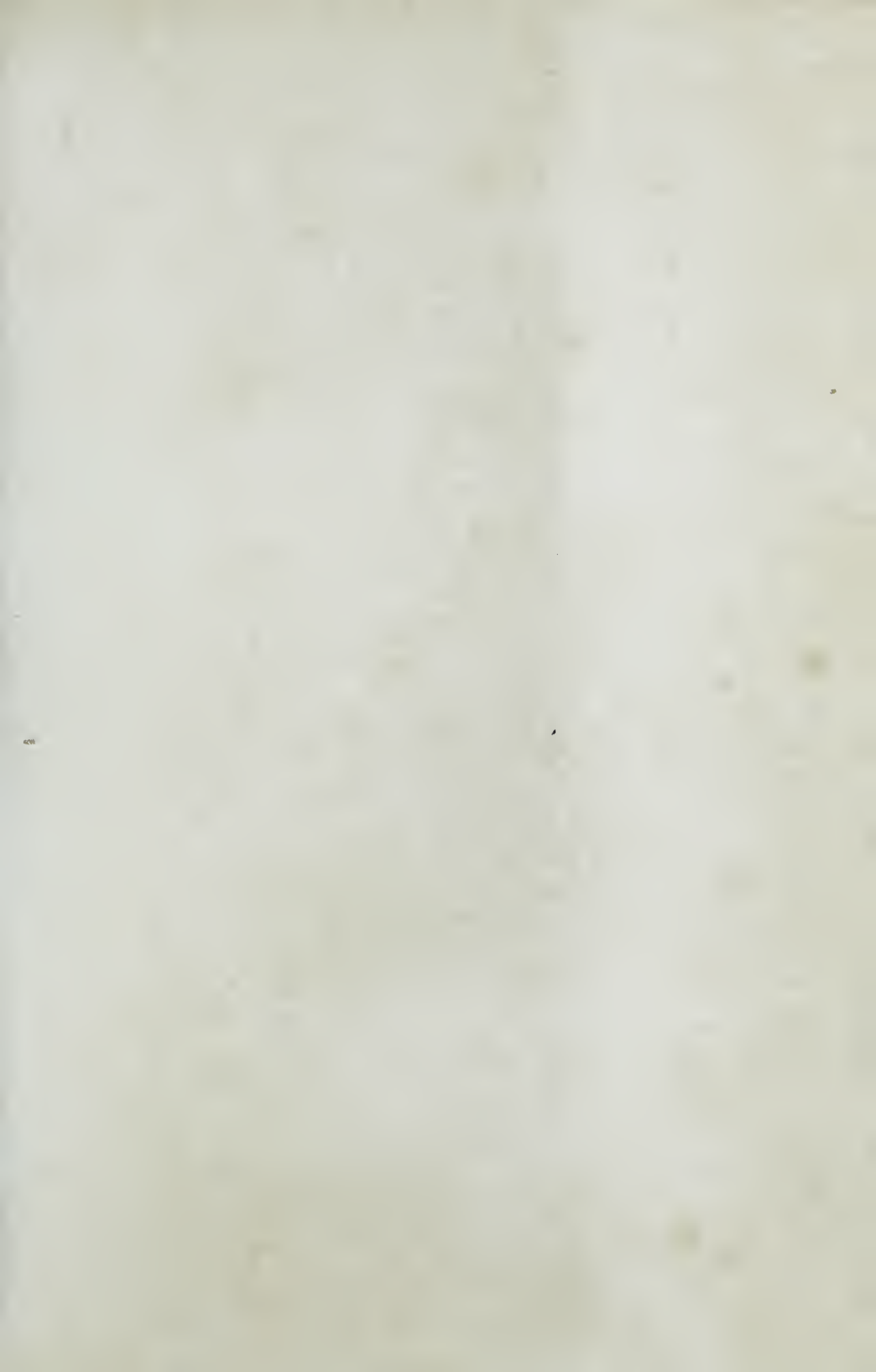


FRINGILLA







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FRINGILLA

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FRINGILLA
OR TALES IN
VERSE BY
RICHARD
DODDRIDGE
BLACKMORE
M. A. OXON
WITH
SUNDRY
DECORATIVE
PICTURINGS
BY WILL H.
BRADLEY

“Quorsum hoc?”—
“Non potui qualem
Philomela querel am
Sed, fringilla velut
pipitibunda, vago.”

CLEVELAND
THE
BURROWS
BROTHERS
COMPANY
M DCCCXCV

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PREFACE

(*Fringilla loquitor*) — “What means your finch?” Being well aware that he cannot sing like a nightingale, He flits about from tree to tree, and twitters a little tale.

ALBEIT he is an ancient bird, who tried his pipe in better days and then was scared by random shots, let him take his chance of lead or hail, if once more he may flutter through the thickets he delights in. All gardeners own that he does no harm, unless he flips into a fountain of young buds, or a very choice ladies' seed-bed. And he hopes that he is now too wise to commit such indiscretions.

Perhaps it would have been wiser still to have shut up his little mandible, or employed it only upon grub. But the long gnaw of last winter's frost, which set mankind ashivering, even in their most downy nest, has made them kindly to the race that has no roof for shelter and no hearth for warmth.

Anyhow, this little finch can do no harm, if he does no good; and if he pleases nobody, he will not be saddened by it, because he has never satisfied himself.

May-day, 1895.

Buscombe and The Well of Saint John are reprinted, with additions and corrections, from "Harper's Monthly Magazine," with kind consent of Messrs. Harper & Brothers.

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PROLOGUE

TO MY PEN (1854)



I
THOU feeble implement
of mind, Wherewith she
strives to write her name,
But, like a mitcher, leaves
behind No signature, no
mark, no claim, No hint
that she hath pined —
Shall ever come a stronger
time, When thou shalt be
a tool of skill And steadfast purpose, to fulfil A
higher task than rhyme?

II
Thou puny instrument of soul, Wherewith she
labours to impart Her aims at some too ar-
duous goal, But fails to bring thy coarser art
Beneath a fine control — Shall ever come a
fairer day, When thou shalt be a buoyant
plume, To soar, where clearer suns illumine,
And fresher breezes play?

III
Thou weak interpreter of heart, So impotent to
tell the tale Of love's delight, of envy's smart,
Of passion, and ambition's bale, Of pride that
dwells apart — Shall I, in length of time, attain
(By walking in the human ways, With love of
Him, who made and sways) To guide thee, not
in vain?

IV
If so, thou shalt be more to me Than sword, or

sceptre, flag, or crown; With mind, and soul,
and heart in thee, Despising gold and sham
renown; But truthful, kind, and free. Then
come; though now a pithless quill, Uncouth,
unfledged, indefinite,—In time thou shalt be
taught to write, By patience and good-will.

LITA OF THE NILE

LITA OF THE NILE (A Tale in Three Parts) Part I

KING and Father, gift and giver, God revealed in form of river, Issuing perfect and sublime From the fountain-head of time, Whom eternal mystery shroudeth, Unapproached, untrack'd, unknown; Whom the Lord of heaven encloudeth With the curtains of His throne, From the throne of heaven descending, Glory, power, and goodness blending, Grant us, ere the daylight dies, Token of thy rapid rise."

II
Ha! it cometh — furrowing, flashing, Red blood rushing o'er brown breast, Peaks, and ridges, and domes, dashing Foam on foam, and crest on crest. 'T is the signal Thebes hath waited, Libyan Thebes, the hundred-gated; Rouse, and robe thee, River-priest, For thy dedication feast. Follows him the loveliest maiden Afric's thousand hills can show; White apparel'd, flower-laden, With the lotus on her brow.

III
Votive maid, who hath espousal Of the river's high carousal; Twenty cubits if he rise, This shall be his bridal prize. Calm and meek of face and carriage, Deigning scarce a quicker

breath, Comes she to the funeral-marriage, The
betrothal of black death. Rosy hands and hennaed
fingers, Nails whereon the onyx lingers,
Clasped, as at a lover's tale, In the bosom's
marble vale.

IV

Silvery scarf, her waist enwreathing, Wafts a
soft Sabaeen balm; Like a cloud of incense,
breathing Round the column of a palm. Snood
of lilies interweaveth (Giving less than it receiveth)
Beauty of her cluster'd brow, Calmly bent
upon us now. Through her dark hair, spread
before us, See the western glory wane, As
in groves of dim Cytorus, Or the bowers of
Taprobane!

V

See—the large eyes, lit by heaven, Brighter
than the Sisters Seven, (Like a star the storm
hath cowed) Sink their flash in sorrow's cloud.
There the crystal tear refraineth, And the founts
of grief are dry; “Father—Mother—none remaineth;
All are dead; and why not I?” Yet, by God's will,
heavenly beauty Owes to heaven alone its duty;
Off, ye priests, who dare adjudge Bride, like this,
to slime and sludge.

VI

When they tread the river's margent, All their
mitred heads are bowed; What hath browned
the ripples argent Like the plume of a thunder
cloud? Where yestre'en the water slumbered,
With a sickly crust encumbered, Leapeth now

a roaring flood, Wild as war, and red as blood.
Every billow hurries quicker, Every surge runs
up the strand; While the brindled eddies flicker,
Scourged as with a levin brand.

VII

Every bulrush, parched and welted, Lifts his
long joints yellow-belted; Every lotus, faint and
sick, Hangs her fragrant tongue to lick. Count-
less creatures, long unthought of, Swarm from
every hole and nook; What is man, that he
makes naught of Other entries in God's book?
Scorpions, rats, and lizards flabby, Centipedes
and hydras scabby, Asp, and slug, and toad,
whose gem Outlasts human diadem.

VIII

Therefore hath the priest-procession Causeway
clean of sandal-wood; That no foul thing make
transgression On the votive maiden's blood.
Pure of blood and soul, she standeth Where the
marble gauge demandeth, Marble pillar, with
black style, Record of the rising Nile. White-
robed priests around her kneeling, Ibis-banner
floating high, Conchs, and drums, and tambours
pealing, And Sesostris standing nigh;

IX

He, whose kingdom-city stretches Further than
our eyesight fetches — Every street it wanders
down Larger than a regal town — Built when
each man was a giant, When the rocks were
masons' stones, When the oaks were osiers
pliant, And the mountains scarcely thrones —

City, whose Titanic portals Scorn the puny
modern mortals, In thy desert winding-sheet,
Sacred from our insect feet.

X

Thebes No-Amon, hundred-gated, Every gate
could then unfold Cavalry ten thousand, plated,
Man and horse, in solid gold. Glancing back
through serried ranges Vivid as his own pha-
langes, Every captain might espy Equal host in
sculpture vie; Down Piromid vista gazing, Ten
miles back from every gate, He can see that tem-
ple blazing Which the world shall never mate.

XI

But the Nile-flood, when it swelleth, Recks not
man, nor where he dwelleth; And — e'en while
Sesostris reigns — Scarce five cubits man attains.
Lo, the darkening river quaieth Like a swamp
by giant trod, And the broad commotion wail-
eth, Stricken with the hand of God. When the
rushing deluge raging Flung its flanks, and
shook the staging, Priesthood, cowering from
the brim, Chanted thus its faltering hymn:

XII

“Ocean sire, the earth enclasping Like a babe
upon thy knee, In thy cosmic cycle grasping
All that hath been, or shall be; Thou, that art
around and over All we labour to discover;
Thou, to whom our world no more Than a
shell is on thy shore; God, that wast Supreme,
or ever Orus, or Osiris, saw; God, with whom
is no endeavour, But Thy will eternal law:



XIII

“We, who keep Thy feasts and fastings, We,
who live on Thy off-castings, Here in low obei-
sance crave Rich abundance of Thy wave.
Seven years now, for some transgression, Some
neglect or outrage vile, Vainly hath our poor
procession Offered life and soul to Nile. Seven
years now of promise fickle, Niggard ooze, and
paltry trickle, Freshet sprinkling scanty dole,
Where the roaring flood should roll.

XIV

“Therefore are thy children dwindled, There-
fore is thine altar bare; Wheat, and rye, and
millet spindled, And the fruits of earth despair.
Men with haggard bellies languish; Bridal beds
are strewn with anguish; Mothers sell their
babes for bread; Half the holy kine are dead.
Is thy wrath at last relaxing? Art thou merci-
ful, once more? Yea, behold the torrent wax-
ing! Yea, behold the flooded shore!

XV

“Nile, that now with life-blood tighest, And in
gorgeous gold subsidest, Richer than our victor
tread Stirred in far Hydaspes' bed, When thy
dwelling crest o'erwaveth Yonder twenty-cubit
mark, And thy tongue of white foam laveth
Borders of the desert dark, This, the fairest
Theban maiden, Shall be thine with jewels
laden; Lift thy furrowed brow, and see Lita,
dedicate to thee!”

XVI

Thus he spake; and lowly stooping O'er the Calasiris hem, Took the holy water, scooping With a bowl of lucid gem; Chanting from the Bybline psalter Touched he then her forehead altar; Sleeking back the trickled jet, There the marriage seal he set. "None of mortals dare pursue thee, None come near thy hallowed side; Nile's thou art, and he shall woo thee — Nile, who swalloweth his bride!"

XVII

With despair's mute self-reliance She accepted death's affiancing; She, who hath no home or rest, Shrank not from the river's breast. Haply there she shall discover Father, lost in wilds unknown, Mother slain, and youthful lover Seen as yet in dreams alone. Ha! sweet maid, what sudden vision Hath dispelled thy cold derision? What new picture hast thou seen Of a world that might have been?

XVIII

From Mount Seir, Duke Iram roveth, Three renewals of the moon; To see Egypt him behoveth, Ere his life be past its noon. Soul and mind at first fell under Flat discomfiture of wonder, With the Nile before him spread, Temple-crowned and tempest-fed! Yet a nobler creed he owneth Than to worship things of space: One true God his heart enthroneth — Heart that throbs with Esau's race.

XIX

Thus he stood, with calm eyes scorning Idols,
priests, and their adorning; Seeing, e'en in nature's show,
Him alone, who made it so. "God of Abraham, our Father,
Earth and heaven, and all we see Are but wings of Thine,
to gather Us, Thy children, back to Thee. All the grandeur
spread before us, All the miracles shed o'er us,
Echoes of the Voice above, Tokens of a Father's love."

XX

While of heaven his heart indited, And his dark eyes swept
the crowd, Sudden on the maid they lighted, Mild and haughty,
meek and proud. Rapid as the flash of sabre, Strong as giant's
toss of caber, Sure as victor's grasp of goal, Came the love-stroke
through his soul. Gently she, her eyes recalling, Felt that heaven
had touched their flight, Peeped again through lashes falling,
Blushed, and shrank, and shunned the light.

XXI

Ah, what booteth sweet illusion, Fluttering glance and soft
suffusion, Bliss unknown, but told in sighs, Breast that shrinks
at its own rise? She who is the Nile's devoted, Courted with
a watery smile; Her betrothal duly noted By the bridesmaid
Crocodile. So she bowed her forehead lowly, Tightened her
tiara holy, And, with every sigh suppressed, Clasped her hands
on passion's breast.

LITA OF THE NILE Part II

TWICE the moon hath waxed and wasted, Lavish of her dew-bright horn; And the wheeling sun hath hasted Fifty days towards Capricorn. Thebes, and all the Misric nation, Float upon the inundation; Each man shouts and laughs before Landing at his own house-door. There the good wife doth return it, Grumbling, as she shows the dish; Chervil, basil, chives, and burnet, Feed, instead of seasoning, fish.

II
Palm-trees, grouped upon the highland, Here and there make pleasant island; On the bark some wag hath wrote, "Who would fly, when he can float?" Udder'd cows are standing pensive, Not belonging to that ilk; How shall horn or tail defensive Keep the water from their milk? Lo, the black swan paddling slowly, Pintail ducks, and sheldrakes holy, Nile-goose flaked, and herons gray, Silver-voiced at fall of day.

III
Flood hath swallowed dikes and hedges, Lately by Sesostris planned; Till, like ropes, its matted edges Quiver on the desert sand. Then each farmer, brisk and mellow, Graspeth by the hand

his fellow; And, as one gone labour-proof,
Shakes his head at the drowned shadoof. Soon
the Nuphar comes, beguiling Sedgy spears, and
swords around, Like that cradled infant smiling,
Whom the royal maiden found.

IV

But the time of times for wonder Is when ruddy
sun goes under, And the dusk throws, half
afraid, Silver shuttles of long shade. Opens
then a scene, the fairest Ever burst on human
view; Once behold, and thou comparest Noth-
ing in the world thereto. While the broad flood
murmurs glistening To the moon that hangeth
listening—Moon, that looketh down the sky
Like an aloe-bloom on high.

V

Sudden conch o'er the wave ringeth! Ere the
date-leaves cease to shake, All, that hath exist-
ence, springeth Into broad light, wide awake.
As at a window of heaven thrown up, All in a
dazzling blaze are shown up; Mellowing, ere
our eyes avail, To some soft enchanter's tale.
Every skiff a big ship seemeth, Every bush with
tall wings clad; Every man his good brain
deemeth The only brain that is not mad.

VI

Hark! The pulse of measured rowing, And
the silver clarions blowing, From the distant
darkness break Into this illumined lake. 'T is
Sesostris, lord of nations, Victor of three con-
tinents, Visiting the celebrations, Priests, and

pomps, and regiments. Kings, from Indus and Araxes, Ister, and the Boreal axes, Horsed his chariot to the waves, Then embarked, his galley-slaves.

VII

Glittering stands the giant royal, Four tall sons are at his back; Twain, with their own corpses loyal, Bridged the flames Pelusiac. As he passeth, myriads bless him, Glorious Monarch all confess him, Sternly upright, to condone No injustice, save his own. He, well pleased, his sceptre swingeth, While his four sons strike the gong; Till the sparkling water ringeth Joy and laughter, joke and song.

VIII

Ah, but while loud merry-making Sets the lights and shadows shaking, While the mad world casts away Every thought that is not gay—Hath not earth, our sweet step-mother, Very different scene hard by, Tossing one, and trampling other, some to laugh, and some to sigh? Where the fane of Hathor lowereth, And the black Myrike embowereth, Weepeth one her life gone by—Over young, oh death, to die!

IX

Nay, but lately she was yearning To be quit of life's turmoil, In the land of no returning, Where all travel ends, and toil. What temptations now entice her? What hath made the world seem nicer? Whence the charm, that strives anew To prolong this last adieu? Ah, her heart can

understand it, Though her tongue can ne'er explain; Let yon granite Sphinx demand it— Riddle, ever solved in vain.

X

No constraint of hands hath bound her, Not a chain hath e'er been round her; Silver star hath sealed her brow, Holy as an Isis cow. Free to wander where she listeth, No immurement must defile (So the ancient law insisteth) This, the hallowed bride of Nile. What reck's Abraham's descendant, Idols, priests, and pomps attendant? And how long shall nature heed What the stocks and stones decreed?

XI

“Fiendish superstitions hold thee To a vile and hideous death; Break their bonds; let love enfold thee; Off, and fly with me,” he saith. “Off! while priests are cutting capers— Priests of beetles, cats, and tapirs, Brutes, who would thy beauty truck For an inch of yellow muck. Lo, my horse, Pyropus, yearneth For the touch of thy light form; Like the lightning, his eye burneth, And his nostril, like the storm.”

XII

“What are those unholy pagans? Can they ride? No more than Dagon. Fishtails ne'er could sit a steed; That belongs to Esau's seed. I will make thee Queen of far lands, Flocks, and herds, and camel-trains, Milk and honey, fruit and garlands, Vines and venison, woods and wains. God is with us; He shall speed us;

Or, (if this vile crew impede us,) Let some
light into their brain, By the sword of Tubal
Cain."

XIII

"Nay," she answered, deeply sighing As the
maid grew womanish; "Love, how hard have
I been trying, To believe the thing I wish.
Thou hast taught me holy teachings, Where to
offer my beseechings — Homage due to heaven
alone, Not to ghosts, and graven stone. Thou
hast shown me truth and freedom, Love, and
faith in One most High; But thou hast not,
Prince of Edom, Taught me, there withal, to lie.

XIV

"Little cause had I for fretting, None on earth
to be regretting, Till I saw thee, brave and kind,
And my heart undid my mind. Better if the
gods had slain me When no difference could be,
Ere the joy had come to pain me, And alas, my
dear one, thee. But shall my poor life throw
shame on Royal lineage of Amon? 'Tis of
Egypt's oldest strains; Kingly blood flows in my
veins.

XV

"Thou hast seen; my faith is plighted That I
will not fly my doom. Honour is a flower
unblighted, Though the fates cut off its bloom.
I have sent my last sun sleeping, And I am
ashamed of weeping. God, my new God, give
me grace, To be worthy of my race. Though
this death our bodies sever, Thou shalt find me

there above, Where I shall be learning ever To
be worthy of thy love."

XVI

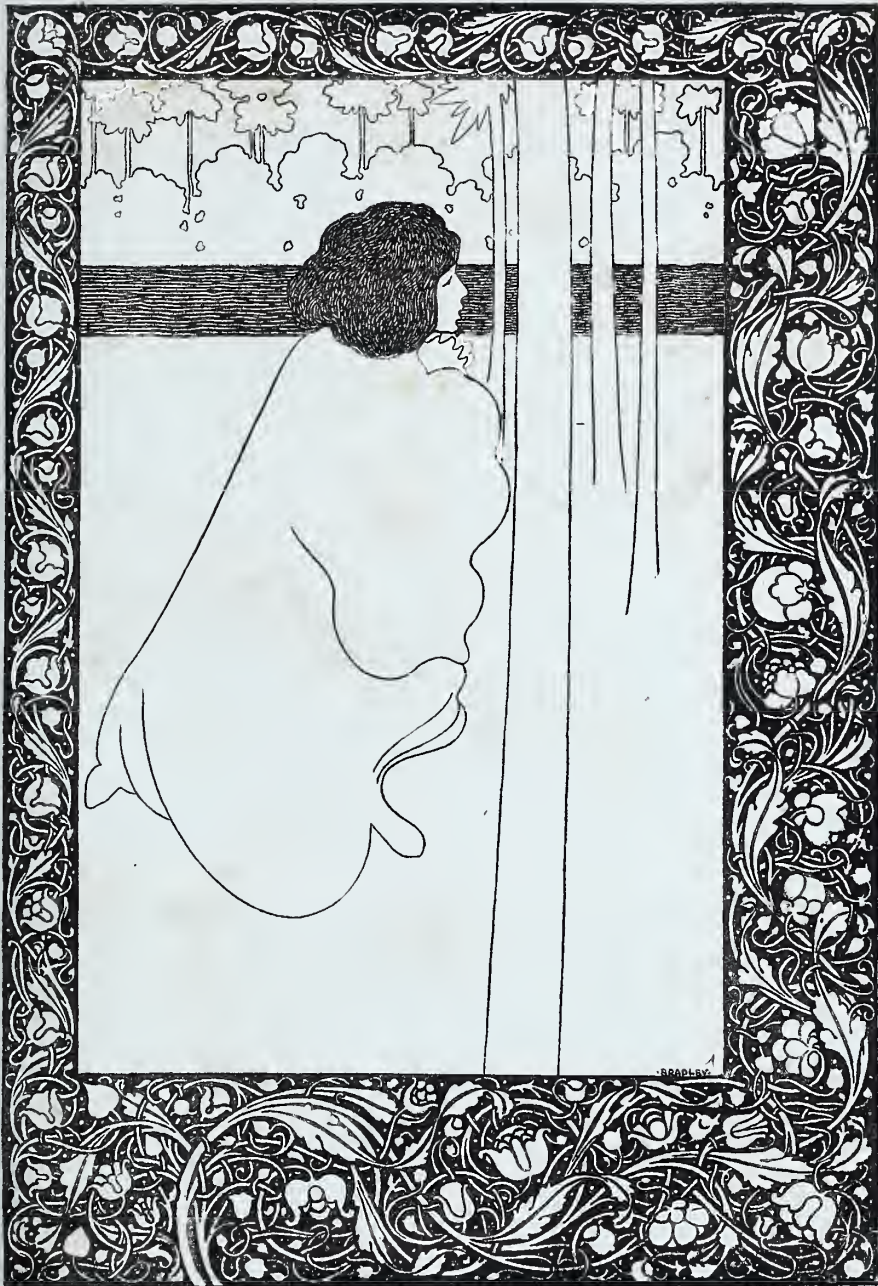
From his gaze she turned, to borrow Pride's
assistance against sorrow — God vouchsafes that
scanty loan When He taketh all our own. Sudden
thought of heaven's inspiring Flashed through
bold Duke Iram's heart; Angels more than
stand admiring, When a man takes his own part.
'T is the law the Lord hath taught us, To undo
what Satan wrought us, To confound the foul
fiend's plan With the manliness of man.

XVII

"Thou art right," he answered lowly, As a
youth should speak a maid; "Like thyself, thy
love is holy; Love is hate, if it degrade. But
when thou hast well surrendered, And thy sac-
rifice is tendered — God do so and more to me,
If I slay not who slay thee! Abraham's God
hath ne'er forsaken Them who trust in Him
alway; Thy sweet life shall not be taken. Rest
and calm thee, while I pray."

XVIII

Like a little child, that kneeleth To tell God
whate'er he feeleth, Bent the tall young warrior
there, And the palm-trees whispered prayer.
She, outworn with woe and weeping, Shared
that influence from above; And the fear of death
went sleeping In the maiden faith and love.
Less the stormy water wailleth, E'en the human
tumult faileth; Stars their silent torches light,
To conduct the car of night.



LITA OF THE NILE Part III

I



O, how bright-eyed morn
awaketh Tower and tem-
ple, nook and Nile, How
the sun exultant maketh
All the world return his
smile. O'er the dry sand
vapour twinkleth Like an
eye when old age wrin-
kleth, While along the
watered shore Runs a river of gold ore. Tem-
ple-front and court resemble Mirrors swung in
wavering light, While the tapering columns
tremble At the view of their own height.

II

Marble shaft and granite portal, Statues of the
gods immortal Quiver, with their figures bent,
In a liquid pediment. Thence the flood-leaf fol-
loweth swiftly Where the peasant, spade in
hand, Guideth many a runnel deftly Through
his fruit and pasture-land; Oft, the irriguous
bank cross-slicing, Plaited trickles he keeps
enticing, Till their gravelly gush he feels Over-
taking his brown heels.

III

Life — that long hath borne the test of More
than ours could bear and live — Springs anew,
to make the best of Every chance the gods may
give; Doum-tree stiffeneth flagging feather,
Date-leaves cease to cling together, Citrons clear

their welted rind; Vines their mildewed sprays
unwind. Gourds and melons spread new lustre
On their veiny dull shagreen; While the starred
pomegranates cluster Golden balls, with pink
between.

IV

Yea, but heaven hath ordered duly, Lest man-
kind should wax unruly, Egypt, garner of all
lore, Narrow as a threshing floor. East and
west lies desolation, Infinite, untrack'd, untold —
Shroud for all of God's creation, When the wild
blast lifts its fold; There eternal melancholy
Maketh all delight unholy; As a stricken widow
glides Past a group of laughing brides.

V

Who is this, that so disdaineth Dome and des-
ert, fear and fate, While his jewel'd horse he
reineth At Amen-Ra's temple gate? He, who
crushed the kings of Asia Like a pod of colo-
casia; Whom the sons of Anak fled, Puling
infants at his tread. Who, with his own shoul-
ders, lifted Thrones of many a conquered land;
Who the rocks of Scythia rifted — King Sesos-
tris waves his hand.

VI

Blare of trumpet fills the valley; Slowly and
majestically Swingeth wide, in solemn state,
Lord Amen-Ra's temple gate. Thence the
warrior-host emergeth, Casque and corselet,
spear and shield, As the tide of red ore surgeth,
From the furnace-door revealed. After them,

tumultuous rushing, Mob and medley, crowd
and crushing, And the hungry file of priests,
Loosely zoned for larger feasts.

VII

“Look!” The whisper’d awe enhances With
a thrill their merry treat; As one readeth grim
romances, In a sunny window-seat — “Look!
It is the maid selected For the sacrifice expected;
By the gods! how proud and brave Steps she
to her watery grave!” Strike up cymbals,
gongs and tabours, Clarions, double flutes and
drums; All that bellows or belabours In a surg-
ing discord comes.

VIII

Scarce Duke Iram can keep under His wild
steed’s disdain and wonder, While his large eyes
ask alway, “Dareth man attempt to neigh?”
He hath snuffed the great Sahara And the mute
parade of stars, Shall he brook this shrill fanfara,
Ramshorns, pigskins, screechy jars? What
hath he to do with rabble? Froth is better than
their babble; Let him toss them flakes of froth
To pronounce his scorn and wrath.

IX

With his nostrils fierce dilating, With his crest
a curling sea, All his volumed power is waiting
For the will to set it free. “Peace, my friend!”
The touch he knoweth Calms his heart, how-
e’er it gloweth; Horse can shame a man, to
quell Passion, where he loveth well. “Nay,
endure we,” saith the rider, “Till her plighted

word be paid; Then, though Satan stand beside her, God shall help me swing this blade."

X

Lo, upon the deep-piled dais, Wrought in hallowed looms of Säis, O'er the impetuous torrent's swoop Stands the sacrificial group! Tall High-priest, with zealot fires Blazing in those eyeballs old, Swathes him, as his rank requires, Head to foot in linen fold. Seven attendants round him vying, In a lighter vesture plying, Four with skirts, and other three Tunic'd short from waist to knee.

XI

Free among them stands the maiden, Clad in white for her long rest; Crowned with gold, and jewel-laden, With a lily on her breast. Lily is the mark that showeth Where that pure and sweet heart gloweth; There must come, to shed her life, Point of sacrificial knife. Here the knife is, cold and gleaming, Here the colder butcher band. Was the true love naught but dreaming, Feeble heart and coward hand?

XII

Strength unto the weak is given When their earthly bonds are riven; Ere the spirit is called away, Heaven begins its tranquil sway. Life hath been unstained, and therefore Pleasant to look back upon; But there is not much to care for When the light of love is gone. Still, though love were twice as fleeting, Longeth she for one last greeting; If her eyes might only dwell Once on his, to say farewell!

XIII

"Glorious Hapi!" spake Piromis, Lifting high his weapon'd hand, "Earth thy footstool, heaven thy dome is, We the pebbles on thy strand. Thou hast leaped the cubits twenty, Dowering us with peace and plenty; Mutha shows thee her retreat, and the desert licks thy feet. We have passed through our purgation, Once again we are thy kin; God, accept our expiation — Maiden pure of mortal sin."

XIV

"Ha!" the king cried, smiling blandly; "Ha!" the trumpets answered grandly. Proudly priest whirled knife on high, While the maiden bowed — to die. Sudden, through the ranks beside her, Scattering men like sparks of flint, Burst a snow-white horse and rider, Rapid as the lightning's glint. One blow hurls Arch-priest to quiver Headless in his beloved river; In the twinkling of an eye All the rest are dead, or fly.

XV

Iram, from Pyropus sweeping As a mower swathes the rye, Caught his love, in terror sleeping, And her light form swings on high. "Soul of Khons!" Sesostris shouted, Striding down the planks blood-grouted — Into his beard fell something light, And he spat, and swooned with fright. What hath made this great king stagger, Reel, and shriek "Unclean, unclean!" Thunderbolt, or flash of dagger? Nay, 't was but a garden bean.

XVI

Brave Pyropus, blood-bespattered, snorts at men
and corpses scattered, Throws his noble chest
more wide, Leaps into the leaping tide. Vainly
hiss a thousand arrows, Launched at random
through the foam; Every stroke the distance
narrows 'Twixt him and his desert home.
Sorely tried, and passion-shaken, Long amid
her foes forsaken, Now, in tumult of surprise,
Lita knows not where she lies

XVII

Till a bright wave breaks upon her, And her
clear perceptions wake — All his valor, prowess,
honor, Scorn of life for her poor sake. Gently
then her eyes she raises (Eyes whence all the
pure soul gazes), Softly brings her lips to his —
Lips wherein the whole heart is. Let the furi-
ous waters welter, Let the rough winds roar
above; Waves are warmth, and storms are
shelter, In the upper heaven of love.

XVIII

Fierce the flood, and wild the danger, Yet the
noble desert ranger Flinches not, nor flags, be-
fore He hath brought them safe ashore. Lives
there man who would have striven, Reckless
thus of storm and sword, Leaped into the gulf,
and given Heart and soul to please his Lord?
With caresses they have plied him, Hand in
hand they kneel beside him, While their mutual
vows they plight To the God of Life and
Light.



XIX

Ha! What meaneth yon sword-flashing?
Trump and shouts from bank and isle? Lo,
the warrior-galleys dashing To avenge insulted
Nile! Haste! The brave steed, leaping lightly
'Neath his double burden sprightly, Challenges,
with scornful note, Every horse in Pharaoh's
boat. King of Egypt, curb thy rages; Lo,
how trouble should be borne! Memnon soothes
the woe of ages With a sweet song every morn.

PAUSIAS AND GLYCERA OR THE
FIRST FLOWER-PAINTER.

PAUSIAS AND GLYCERA* (A Story in Three Scenes)—Scene I.: Outside the gate of Sicyon; morning—Glycera weaving garlands, Pausias stands admiring.

Pausias.



Ye gods! I thought myself the Prince of Art, By Phoebus and the Muses set apart To kill the critic of his own complaint, And show the world the proper way to paint. But lo, a young maid trips out of a wood, And what becomes of all I understood? I rub my lids; I could not draw a line If ninety Muses came, instead of nine. Thy name, fair maiden, is a debt to me; Teach him to speak, whom thou hast taught to see. Myself already some repute have won, For I am Pausias, Brietes' son; To boast behoves me not, nor do I need, But often wish my friends to win the meed. So shall they now; no more will I pursue The beaten track, but try what thou hast shown—New forms, new curves, new harmonies of tone, New dreams of heaven, and how to make them true."

Glycera.

"Fair sir, 't is only what I plucked this morn,
Kind nature's gift ere you and I were born.

* Plin., Nat. Hist., XXXV, xi.

Through mossy woods and watered vales I
roam. While day is young, and bring my treas-
ure home; Each lovely bell so tenderly I bear,
It knoweth not my fingers from the air; Lo,
now, they scarce acknowledge their surprise,
And how the dew-drops sparkle in their eyes!"

Pausias.

"Because the sun shines out of thine. But
hush! To praise a face, praiseworthy, makes
it blush. I am not of the youths who find de-
light In every pretty thing that meets their sight;
My father is the sage of Sicyon, And I — well,
he is proud of such a son."

Glycera.

"And proud am I my mother's child to be, And
earn for her the life she gave to me. Her name
is Myrto of the silver hair, Not famed for wis-
dom, but loved everywhere."

Pausias.

"Then whence thine art? Hath Phoebus given
thee boon Of wreath and posy, fillet and fes-
toon? Of light and shade, proportion, depth,
and tone — Lo, I could cast my palette down,
and groan!"

Glycera.

"No art, fair sir, hath ever crossed my thought;
The lesson I delight in comes untaught. The
flowers around me take their own sweet way,
They tell me what they wish — and I obey.
Unlike poor us, they feel no spleen or spite, But
earn their joy by ministering delight. So loved

and cherished, each may well suppose itself at home again just where it grows. No dread have they of what the fates may bring, But trust their gods, and breathe perpetual Spring."

Pausias.

"Fair child of Myrto, simple-hearted maid, Thy innocence doth arrogance upbraid. Ye gods, I pray you make a flower of me, That I may dwell with nature, and with thee."

Glycera.

"I see the brave sun leap the city wall! The gates swing wide; I hear the herald's call. The Archon hath proclaimed the market-day, And mother will shed tears at my delay. The priest of Zeus hath ordered garlands three; And while I tarry, who will wait for me?"

Pausias.

"No picture have I sold for many a moon, But fortune must improve her habits soon; Then will I purchase all thy stock-in-trade, And thou shalt lead me to thy bower of green; There will I paint the flowers, and thee, their Queen — The Queen of flowers, that nevermore shall fade."

Glycera.

"I know a wood-nymph, who her dwelling hath Among the leaves, and far beyond the path, With myrtle and with jasmine roofed across, Enlaced with vine, and carpeted with moss; Whose only threshold is a plaited brook, Whereby the primrose at herself may look;

While birds of song melodious make the air —
But oh! I must not take a stranger there.”

Pausias.

“A stranger! Canst thou fancy me unkind?
Good art is surety for a gentle mind. True
painter looks from airy distance down; No
maid can fear a youth who loves renown.”

Glycera.

“Thy words are trim. If mother deems them
true, Thou shalt come with me. But till then,
adieu!” (Exit.)

Pausias.

“Oh where am I? The mind is all for art —
But one warm breath transforms it into heart.”

PAUSIAS AND GLYCERA— Scene II. : A wood near Sicyon. Pausias with his apparatus. Glycera carrying flowers.

Pausias.



CONFOUNDED tangle !
Who could paint all this ?
A bear might hug him,
or a serpent hiss ! For
love of nature justly am I
famed ; But when she
goes as far as this, she
ought to be ashamed."

Glycera.

"Nay, be not frightened by a small affray, The love of beauty cannot prove its day. But lo, where yonder coney-tracks begin, My nymph ordains her favourite bower within. Yon oak hath reared its rugged antlers thus Before Deucalion lived, or Daedalus. Inside, her woodland Majesty doth keep A world of wonders — if one dared to peep — Of things that burrow, glide, spin webs, or creep ; Strange creatures, which before they live must die, And plants that hunt for prey, and flowers that fly !"

Pausias.

"My love of nature freezes in a trice ; I loathe all ear-wigs, beetles, and wood-lice. Outside her bower the lady must remain, If she doth wish to have her portrait ta'en."

Glycera.

"'T is not the lady thou must paint — but me."

Pausias.

“Aha! that will I, with a glow of glee; But when I offered, somebody was vexed, And blushed, and frowned, and longed to say ‘what next?’”

Glycera.

“A painter’s tongue hath learnt to paint, I trow. But oh! that order—I remember now—For twenty chaplets, from the priest of Zeus! Ah, what a grand, majestic Hiercus! So pleased he was, and praised my simple skill, And thinks of giving a larger order still.”

Pausias.

“The priest of Dis! a scoundrel with three wives! I’ll pull his triple beard, if he arrives.”

Glycera.

“High words and threats profane this hallowed place, Where Time rebukes the fuss of human race. And, gentle sir, what harm hath he done thee? It is my mother whom he comes to see. Lo, how the gods our puny wrath deride, With peace and beauty spread on every side! This earth with pleasure of the Spring complete, Too bright to dwell on, were it not so sweet; No theft of man its affluence impairs, A thousand flowers, without a loss, it spares, Not one of which can human hand portray, Nor brush pursue their interwoven play, No palette match their brilliance, although Pandora filled her box from Iris’ bow.”



Pausias.

“Her want of faith sweet Glycera will rue,
When she hath seen what Pausias can do.”

Glycera.

“Forgive me, sir ; in truth, it was no taunt. A
great man can do anything — but vaunt.”

Pausias.

“E'en that he can do, if he sees the need. But
out on words, when time hath come for deed !
Arrange thee, fair one, with thy fairest smile,
As if the world belonged to thee awhile ; The
sun around thee waves his golden plume, And
every blossom is thy beauty's bloom.”

Glycera.

“Why stand we here, so early of the morn, In
love with things that treat our love with scorn
— Gray crags, where time, with folded pinion,
broods, And ever young antiquity of woods ;
The brooks that babble, and the flowers that
blush, Ere woman is a reed, or man a rush ?
And he for ever, as the gods ordain, Would fain
revive with art what he hath slain ; Shall na-
ture fail to laugh, who sees him yearn To teach
the canvas what he ne'er can learn ?”

Pausias.

“Sweet Muse, while thus through heaven's
too distant vault Thy great mind roves — how
shall we earn our salt ? Though art is not
encouraged as of old, She is worth a score of
nature ; I design To manufacture, from these

flowers of thine, A silver talent * — or perhaps of gold !”

Glycera.

“ Good heavens ! how precious is your Worship’s time ! Some minds are lowly, others too sublime. Before thee all my simple flowers I spread ; Long may they live, when Glycera is dead !”

Pausias.

“ The gods forbend ! Fair omen from fair maid — Bright tongue, recall the dark thing thou hast said !”

Glycera.

“ Then long live they, with Glycera to aid !”

Pausias.

“ And Pausias crowned by Critics, to non-plus Euphranor, Cydias, and Antidotus. But what are they ? Below my feet they lie ; Poor sons of pelf ; the son of Art am I. Now rest thee, maiden, on this pillowy bed, With fragrance canopied, with beauty spread ; Above thee hovers eglantine’s caress, Around thee glows entangled loveliness ; Shy primose smiles, thy gentle smile to woo, And violets take thy glances for the dew.”

Glycera.

“ Then will they pluck themselves, to see me laugh ? Good flowers bring cash ; but who will pay for chaff ? But haply thus the true poet in-

* Lucullus is said to have given two talents for a mere copy of this picture.

tervenes, To make us wonder what on earth he means."

Pausias.

"A poet! We do things in a loftier way; A painter is a poet who makes it pay. A poet, though deep and mystic as the Sphinx, Will ne'er earn half of what he eats and drinks; He dreams of gods, but of himself — he thinks."

PAUSIAS AND GLYCERA — Scene III. :
A western slope near Sicyon. Pausias has his easel set; Glycera is dressed in white.

Pausias.



SEVEN times the moon
hath filled her silver horn,
And twice a hundred suns
awoke the morn, Since
thou and I — for half the
praise is thine — Began
this study of the flowers
divine.”

Glycera.

“Alas! how swiftly have the months gone by!”

Pausias.

“Not swift alone, but passing sweet for me.”

Glycera.

“The world, that was so large, is you and I.”

Pausias.

“And shall be larger still when it is — ‘We.’”

Glycera (aside).

“Sweet dual! Alas, too sweet to ever be!”

Pausias.

“A tear, bright Glycera, in those eyes of thine,
Those tender eyes, that should with triumph
shine, When I, the owner of that precious heart,
Am shouting Iö Paean of high art. The noblest
picture underneath the sun — A few more
strokes, and victory is won!”

Glycera.

“Nay, heed me not. True pleasure is not dry ;
The sunrise of the heart bedews the eye.”

Pausias.

“If that were all — but lately there hath been A
listless air beneath thy lively mien ; Thyself art
all fair petal and sweet perfume, And smiles that
light the damask of thy bloom ; Yet some pale
distance seems to chill the whole.”

Glycera.

“Forgive me, love, forgive a timorous soul.
Through brightest hours untimely vapours rise
— But while I prate, the lucky moment flies.
The work, the weather, and the world are
fair ; A few more strokes, and fame flies every-
where.”

Pausias.

“Who cares for fame, except with love to
share ?”

Glycera.

“To share ! Nay, every breath of it is mine
Whene'er it breathes on thee, for I am thine.
But pardon first — if I have seemed sometime
Impatient, glib, too pert for things sublime. Re-
member that I meant not so to sink ; Forgive
your Glycera, when you come to think.”

Pausias.

“I'll not forgive my Glycera — until She hath
discovered how to do some ill. Now don once
more this coronet of bloom, While lilies sweet
thy sweeter breast illumine.”

Glycera (aside).

“ Ah me, what brightness wasted upon gloom !
(Aloud.)

Oh fling thy sponge across this wretched face,
A patch uncouth amid a world of grace.”

Pausias.

“ Sweet love, thy beauty far outshineth them ;
The tinsel they are, thou the living gem. Great
gift of gods ! Shall flowers of earth despise
Those flowers of heaven — thy tresses and
thine eyes ? Away with gloom ! let no ill-
boding make My heart to falter, or my hand
to shake. One hour is all I crave. If that be
long, Sweet lips, beguile it with my favourite
song.”

Glycera.

“ A song like mine, a childish lullaby, Will close
— when needed wide awake — thine eye. But
since thou so demandest, let me try. In the
fresh woods have I been, Sprinkled with the
morning dew ; And of all that I have seen, Lo,
the fairest are for you ! Take your choice of
many a flower, Lily, rose and melilot, Lilac,
myrtle, virgin’s bower, Pansy, and forget-
me-not ; Ladies-tresses, and harebell, Jasmine,
daphne, violet, Meadow-sweet, and pimpernel,
Maidenhair, and mignonette. What is gold,
that doth allure Foolish hearts from field and
flower ? If you plant them in it pure, Will they
keep alive an hour ? What is fame, compared
with these, Fame of wisdom, sword, or pen ?

Who would quit the meadow breeze, For the sultry breath of men? These have been my childhood's love, These my maiden visions were; When I meet their gaze above, These will tell me God is there."

Pausias.

"'Tis done. No more the palsied doubt molests; The crown of glory on my labour rests. Thy clear voice hath my flagging thoughts supplied; My model thou, my teacher, and my bride! Now stand, beloved one, where the soft glow lies, Yet judge not rashly, ere the colour dries. Find every fault, pick every flaw thou canst; I'll not be vexed; true art is thus advanced. So meek is art, that (when it comprehends) It loves the carping of its dearest friends. If my own bride condemns my efforts — let her. A poor daub? Well, let someone do it better."

Glycera.

"My love, my Lord, my Monarch of high art, Forgive a tongue held fast and bound by heart. Not Orpheus, Linus, or great Hermes could Find words to make their rapture understood. No Muse, no Phoebus, hath this work inspired, But Jove himself, with heaven's own splendour fired. I see the nursing fingers of the day, And night as well, upon their offspring play — The silent glide of moon that hushed their sleep, (As mother at her infant steals a peep) — Anon, with pearly glances half withdrawn, The gentle hesita-

tion of the dawn; I see the sun his golden target raise, And drive in tremulous ranks the woodland haze; Awakened by whose call the flowers arise, With tears of joy, and blushes of surprise; From bulb and bush, from leaf and blade, spring up Bell, disk, or star, plume, sceptre, fan, or cup; A thousand forms, a thousand hues of bloom Fill earth and heaven with beauty and perfume. All this, by thine enchantment, liveth here; Oh, wondrous power, that chills my pride with fear!"

Pausias.

"Thy praise, sweet critic, makes thee doubly dear; But what of thy fair self — thy form, thy face, The flower of flowers, the gracefulness of grace?"

Glycera.

"I see why thou hast placed me among these; I serve a purpose — 't is to scare the bees. Sweet love hath right to place me anywhere; And yet I mourn to find myself so fair."

Pausias.

"A maid lament her beauty! Thou hast shown, A thousand times, a wit beyond mine own; Yet is it kind to such a love as mine To grudge it refuge in a lovely shrine?"

Glycera.

"No shrine, no throne, of earth or heaven above, Can be too fair a dwelling-place for love. But that which makes me grieve myself to see, Is memory of the bitter loss to thee; That earthly

charms — as men such things esteem — Should tantalize thee, in a weeping dream !”

Pausias.

“My own, my only love, what wouldst thou say? My heart hath borne a heavy bode all day.”

Glycera.

“I durst not tell thee till thy work was done; But now I must, before the setting sun. Last night, when life was lapsed in quietude, Beside my couch a stately figure stood — A virgin form, in garb of chase arrayed, With bow and quiver, baldrick, and steel blade; Majestic as a palm that scorns the wind, And taller than the daughters of mankind. ’T was Artemis, close-girt in silver sheen, The Goddess of the woods, the Maiden-queen. Cold terror seized me, and mute awe, the while She oped her proud lips, with an icy smile — ‘Whose votary art thou? Shall I resign To wanton Cypris this sworn nymph of mine? Have I enfeoffed thee of my holiest glen, To have thee tainted by the lips of men? Shall urchin Eros laugh at my decree? No Hymen torch, no loosened zone for thee! To-morrow, when my crescent tops yon oak, Thou shalt return unto thy proper yoke.’ She closed her lips, and like the barb of frost, Her fingers on my bounding heart outspread: My breast is ice, my soul is of the dead; The sod, the cold clay, are my marriage-bed; Sweet sun, sweet flowers, sweet love, for ever lost !”



Pausias.

"I'll not endure it; it shall ne'er be true; If that cold tyrant comes, I'll run her through."

Glycera.

"What canst thou do, against the Goddess trine, Selene, Artemis, and Proserpine? Oh love, thou hast before thee life and fame, And some new Glycera, with a loftier name. So tender is my heart that it would break To think that thou wert suffering for my sake. Be angry with me; doubt my faith — or try; And count it for a crime of mine to die; Or tell thyself — if still a pain there be, That wealth and grandeur were not meant for me. Yet think, sometimes, when thou art well consoled, That no one loves thee like some one of old."

Pausias.

"My life, my soul, my heart of hearts, my all, Together let us cling, till death befall."

Glycera.

"The sun is gone; the crescent waxeth bright; I fly to darkness, or eternal light. Great are the gods, but greater yet is love; Here thou art mine, and I am thine above."

Pausias.

"Oh fame and glory, pomp, and power, and state, What are ye when the heart is desolate? A few more years of labour, and slow breath — Till death benign have overtaken death."

KADISHA

“There is a curious legend as to the origin of jealousy. When Adam and Eve were in Paradise, the former was accustomed to retire at eventide to the recesses of the garden, for the purpose of prayer. On one of these occasions the devil appeared to Eve, and informed her that her solitude was to be accounted for by the attractions of another fair one. Eve replied that it could not be so, as she was the only woman in existence. ‘If I show you another, will you believe me?’ returned the Evil One, and produced a mirror, in which she saw her own reflection, and mistook it for her rival.” [“Life in Abyssinia,” by Mr. Parkyns; Murray, Albemarle Street.] The Kadisha, flowing to the south of Lebanon, is called “the holy river,” as having been a minor stream of Paradise.

KADISHA OR THE FIRST JEALOUSY

An Eastern Legend Part I

TRUE love's regale is incomplete Till bitter leaven makes it sweet; Accept not then our tale amiss That jealousy was part of bliss, But rather note a mercy here, That fact was thus outrun by fear; And so, before the harder bout, When sin must be encountered, too, A woman's heart already knew The way to conquer doubt.

I

When sleep was in the summer air, And stars looked down on Paradise, And palms and cedars answered fair The visionary night-wind's sighs And murmuring prayer; When every flower was in its hood, (By clasps of diamond dew retained) Or sunk to elude Phalana's brood, Down slumber's breast with shadows veined, In solitude; The citron, and the damask rose, Pomegranate, camphor, argentine, And ivory-sceptred aloe Queen, All dreamy in repose;

II

When rivulets were loth to creep, Except unto the pillow moss, And distant lake, encurtained deep, Was but a silver thread across The eyes of sleep; When nightingales, in the sycamore, Sang low and soft, as an echo dreaming, And

slept the moon upon heaven's shore, The tidal
shore of heaven, beaming With lazuled ore ;
When new-born earth was fain to lean In Sum-
mer's arms, recovering The unaccustomed toil
of Spring, Why slept not Eve, its Queen ?

III

Upon a smooth, fern-mantled stone She sat,
and watched the wicket-gate, Not timid in her
woman's throne, Nor lonely in her sinless state,
Though all alone ; For having spread her simple
board With grapes and peaches, milk and flow-
ers, She strewed sweet mastic o'er the sward,
And waited, through the darkening hours, Step
of her lord. Such innocence around her breathed,
And freshness of young nature's play, The sen-
sitive plant shrank not away, And cactus' swords
were sheathed.

IV

The vision of her beauty fell Like music on a
moonlight place, Or trembles of a silver bell, Or
memory of young mother's face On childhood's
spell ; The grace that wandered free of laws,
The look that lit the heart's confession, Had
never dreamed how fair it was, Nor guessed
that purity's expression Is beauty's cause ; No
more that unenquiring heart Perused the sweet
home of her breast, Than turtle-doves unline
their nest To scan the outer part.

V

Although in all that garden fair Whate'er de-
light abode or grew, Flowers, and trees, and

balmy air, Fountains, and birds, and heaven
blue Beyond compare ; In her their various
charms had met, And grown more varied by
combining, As budded plants do give and get,
Each inmate doubling while consigning His
several debt ; And yet she nursed one joy above
Her thousand charms, nor born of them, But
blooming on a single stem — Her true faith in
her love.

VI

And though, before she heard his foot, The
moon had climbed the homestead palm, Flinging
to her the shadowed fruit, And tree-frogs ceased
to break the calm, And woods were mute ;
With sudden transport, ever new, She blushed,
and sprang from forth the bower, Her eyes as
bright as moon-lit dew, Her bosom glad as
snow-veiled flower When sun shines through ;
He, with a natural dignity, Untaught self-con-
sciousness by harm, Sustained her with his
manly arm, And smiled upon her glee.

VII

Next day, when early evening shone Along the
walks of Paradise, Strewing with gold the hills,
her throne, Embarrassing the winds with spice
(Too rich a loan) — Fair Eve was in her bower
of ease, A cool arcade of fruit and flowers,
From North and East enclasped by trees, But
open to the western showers And southern
breeze. Here followed she her gardening trade,
Her favourites' simple needs attending, And

singing soft, above them bending, A song herself had made.

VIII

In evening's calm, she walked between The tints and shades of rich delight, While overhead came arching green Many a shrub and parasite, To crown their Queen. There laughed the joy of the rose, among Myrtle and Iris, * heaven's eve, Magnole, with cups of moonlight hung, And Fuchsia's sunny chandelry And coral tongue; And where the shy brook fluttered through Nepenthe held her chalice leaf (Undrained as yet by human grief), And broad Nymphaea grew.

IX

But where the path bent towards the wood, Across it hung a sombre screen, The deadly night-shade, leaden-hued; and there, behind it, darkly seen, A Being stood; The form, if any form it had, Was likest to a nightly vision In mantle of amazement clad; a terror-sense, without precision, Of something bad. A tremble chilled the forest shade, A roving lion turned and fled, The birds cowered home in hush of dread, But Eve was not afraid.

X

She stood before him, sweetly bold, To keep him from her garden shrine, With hair that fell, a shower of gold, Around her figure's snowy line And rosy mould; He (with a re-awakened

* Plut. OEgypt.

sense Of goodness, long for ever lost, And angel beauty's pure defence) Shrank back, unable to accost Such innocence; But envy soon scoffed down his shame, And with a smile, designed for fawning, But like hell's daybreak sickly dawning, His crafty accents came.

XI

"Sweet ignorance, 't is sad and hard To break thy pretty, childish spell, And my soft heart hath such regard For thine, that I will never tell What may be spared." He turned aside, o'erwhelmed by pain, And drew a sigh of deep compassion; She trembled, flushed, and gazed again, And prayed him quick, in woman's fashion, To speak it plain; "Then, if thou must be taught to grieve, And scorn the guile thou hast adored — The man who calls himself thy lord, Where goes he every eve?"

XII

"Nay, then," she cried, "if that be all, I care not what thou hast to say; The guile that lurks therein is small; My husband but retires to pray, At evening call." "To pray! oh yes, and on his knees May-hap to find a lovely being; Devotions so devout as these Are best at night, with no one seeing Among the trees." She blushed as deep as modesty; Then glancing back as bright as pride, "What woman can he find," she cried, "In all the world, but me?"

XIII

He laughed with a superior sneer, Enough to

shake e'en woman's faith; "Wilt thou believe me, simple dear, If I am able now," he saith, "To show her here?" She cried aloud with lightsome heart, "Be that the test whereon to try thee; Nature and heaven shall take my part; Come, show this rival; I defy thee And all thy art." A mirror, held in readiness, He set upright before her feet — "Now can thy simple charms compete With beauty such as this?"

XIV

A lovelier sight therein she saw Than ever yet had charmed her eyes, A fairer picture, void of flaw, Than any, even Paradise Itself, could draw; A woman's form of perfect grace, In shadowy softness delicate; Though flushed by sunset's rich embrace, A white rose could not imitate Her innocent face; Then, through the deepening glance of fear The shaft of doubt came quivering, The sorrow-shaft — a sigh its wing, And for its barb a tear.

XV

"Ah me!" she cried, "too true it is; A simple, homely thing like Eve Hath not a chance to rival this, But must resign herself to grieve O'er by-gone bliss. Till now it was enough for me To keep the form our Father made: Oh, Adam, I was proud to be (As I have felt, and thou hast said) A part of thee. No marvel that my lord can spare His true and heaven-appointed bride; And yet affection might have tried To fancy me as fair."



XVI

The Tempter, glorying in his wile, Hath ta'en
his mirror and withdrawn; Again the flowers
look up and smile, And brightens off from air
and lawn The taint of guile. But smiles come
not again to Eve, Nor brightens off her dark
reflection; Her garland-crown she hath ceased
to weave, And, plucking, maketh no selection,
Only to grieve. She feels a dewy radiance
steep The languid petals of her eyes, And hath
another sad surprise, To know the way to
weep.

KADISHA Part II



HE tears were still in woman's eyes When morn awoke on Paradise; And still her sense of shame forbade To tell her grievance, or upbraid, Nor knew she which was dearer cost, To seek him or to shun him most.

Then Adam, willing to believe A heart by casual fancy moved Would soon come back at voice she loved, Addressed his song to Eve.

I

"Come, fairest, while the morn is fair, And dews are bright as yon clear eyes; Calm down this tide of troubled hair, Forget with me all other sighs Than summer air. Like me, the woodland shadows roam At light (their fairer comrade's) side; And peace and joy salute our home, And lo, the sun in all his pride — My sunshine, come. The fawns and birds, that know our call, Are waiting for our presence — see, They wait my presence, love; and thee, The most desired of all.

II

"The trees, which thought it grievous thing To weep their own sweet leaves away, Untaught as yet how soon the Spring Upon their nestled heads should lay Her callow wing — The trees, whereat we smiled again, To see

them, in their growing wonder, Suppose their buds were verdant rain; Until the gay winds rustled under Their feathered train. Lo, now they stand in braver mien, And, claiming stronger shadow-right, Make prisoner of the wayward light, And strew the winds with green.

III

“Of all the flowers that bow the head, Or gaze erect on sun and sky, Not one there is declines to shed, Or standeth up to qualify His incense meed. Of all that blossom, one by one, Or join their lips in loving cluster, Not one hath now resolved alone, Or taken counsel, that his lustre Shall be unshown. So let thy soul a blossom be, To breathe the fragrance of its praise, And lift itself in early days, To Him who fosters thee.

IV

“Of all the founts bedropped with light, Or silver tressed with shade of trees, Not one there is but sprinkles bright Its plume of freshness on the breeze, And jewel'd flight. Of all that hush among the moss, Or prattling shift the lily-vases, Not one there is but purls across A gush of the delight that causes Its limpid gloss. So let thy heart a fountain be, To rise in sparkling joy, and fall In dimpled melody — and all For love of home and me.”

V

The only fount her heart became Rose quick with sighs, and fell in tears; While pink upon

her white cheek came (Like apple-blossom
among pear's) The tinge of shame. Her hus-
band, pierced with new alarm, Bent nigh to
ask of her distresses, Enclasping her with shel-
tering arm, Unwinding by discreet caresses The
thread of harm. Then she, with sobs of slow
relief (For silence is the jail of care) Confessed,
for him to heal or share, The first of human
grief.

VI

"I cannot look on thee, and think That thou
hast ceased to hold me dear; I cannot break the
loosened link, When thou, my only one, art
near, How can I shrink? So it were better,
love—I mean, My lord, it is more wise and
right—That I, as one whose day hath been,
Should keep my pain from pleasure's sight, And
live unseen. And—though it breaks my heart
to say—However sad my loneliness, I fear thou
wouldst rejoice in this, To have me far away.

VII

"I know not how it is with man, Perhaps his
nature is to change, On finding consort fairer
than—But, oh, I cannot so arrange My nature's
plan. And, haply, thou hast never thought To
vex, or make me feel forsaken; But since to thee
the thing was naught, Supposed 't would be
as gaily taken, As lightly brought. Yet, is it
strange that I repine, And feel abased in lonely
woe, To lose thy love—or e'en to know That
half of it is mine?

VIII

“For whom have I on earth but thee, What heart to love, or home to bless? Although it was not wise, I see, To think that some one felt no less Regard for me. But even now, if thou wilt stay, Or try, at least, no more to wander, And let me love thee day by day, Till time or habit make thee fonder (If so it may) — Thou shalt have one more truly bent, In homely wise, on serving thee, Than any stranger e’er can be; And Eve shall seem content.”

IX

Not loud she wept; but Hope could hear Brave Hope, who in the life-long race By this proviso vanquished Fear, That each alternate step should trace A smile and tear. But Adam, lost in wide amaze, Regarded her with troubled glances, Misdoubting, ’neath her steady gaze, Himself to be in strange romances, And dreamy haze. “Oh monstrous fraud! Oh lies immense!” Yet whither had his wonder flown, His own descendants had he known — Those of the present tense?

X

She told him what the Tempter said, And what her frightened self had seen (That form in loveliness arrayed, With modest face and graceful mien), And how displayed. Then, well content to show his bride The worldly knowledge he possessed (That world whereof was none beside), He laid her hand upon his breast, And

thus replied: "Wife, mirror'd here too deep to see,
A little way down yonder path, And I will show thee form which hath Enchanted thee and me."

XI

Kadisha is a streamlet fair, Which hurries down the pebbled way
As one who hath small time to spare, So far to go, so much to say
To summer air. Sometime the wavelets wimple in O'erlapping tiers of crystal shelves,
And little circles dimple in, As if the waters quaffed themselves,
The while they spin. Thence, in a clear pool, overbent
With lotus-tree and tamarind flower, Empearled, and lulled in golden bower,
Kadisha sleeps content.

XII

Their steps awoke the quiet dell; The first of men was smiling gay;
Still trembled Eve beneath the spell, The mystery of that passion sway
She could not quell. As they approached the silver strand,
He plucked a moss-rose budding sweetly, And weaving bright her tresses' band,
Therein he set the blossom featly, And took her hand.
He led her past the maiden-hair, Forget-me-not, and meadow-sweet,
Until the margin held her feet Like water-lilies fair.

XIII

"Behold," he cried, "on yonder wave The only one with whom I stray,
The only image still I have Too often, even while I pray
To Him who gave." The form she saw was long un-

known, Except as that beheld yestre'en, Till
viewing not that form alone But his, with hands
enclasped between, She guessed her own. And,
bending o'er in sweet surprise, Perused, with
simple child's delight, The flowing hair, and
forehead white, And soft inquiring eyes.

XIV

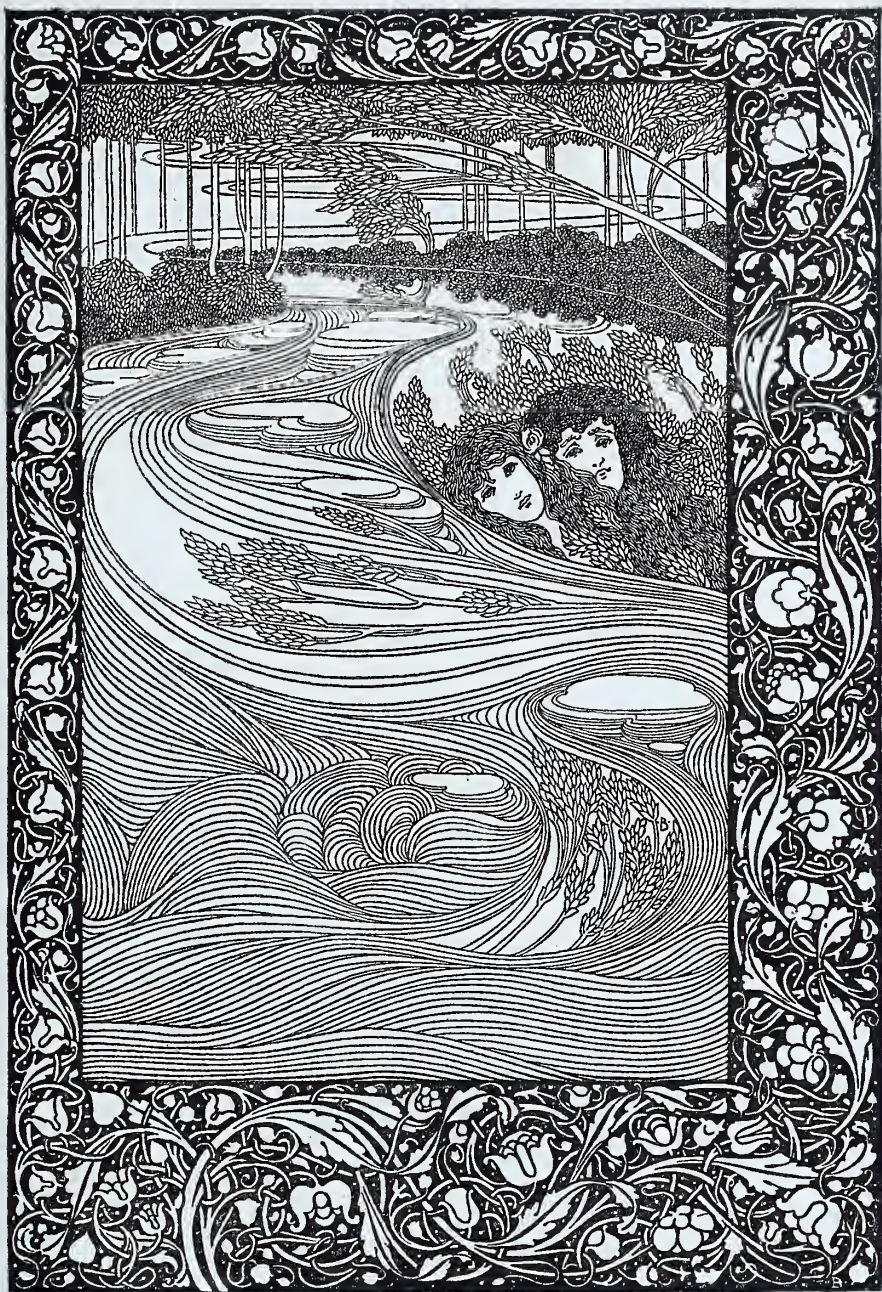
Then, blushing to a fairer tint Than water
might pretend to catch, "I see," she cried, "a
lovely print, But surely I can never match This
lily glint! So pure, so innocent and bright, So
charming free, without endeavour, So fancy-
touched with pensive light, I think that I could
gaze for ever With new delight. And now, that
rosebud in my hair—Perhaps it should be
placed above— And yet I will not change it, love,
Since thou hast set it there.

XV

"Vain Eve, why make so much of Eve? What
matter for thy form or face? Thy beauty is if
love believe Thee worthy of that treasured place
Thou ne'er shalt leave. Oh, husband, mine,
and mine alone, Take back my faith that dared
to wander; Forgive my joy to have thee shown
Not fleeting as thine image yonder, But all mine
own. And, love, if this be vain of me, This
pleasure and the pride I take, 'T is only for thy
dearer sake To be so fair to thee."

XVI

No more she said, but smiling fell, And lost her
sorrow on his breast; Her love-bright eyes upon



him dwell Like troubled waters laid at rest In
comfort's well; 'T is nothing more, an if she
weep, Than joy she cannot else reveal; As
onyx-gems of Pison keep A tear-vein, where the
sun may steal Throughout their deep. May
every Adam's fairer part Thus, only thus, a rival
find — The image of herself, enshrined Within
the faithful heart!

MOUNT ARAFA

Mount Arafa, situated about a mile from Mecca, is held in great veneration by the Mussulmans as a place very proper for penitence. Its fitness in this respect is accounted for by a tradition that Adam and Eve, on being banished out of Paradise, in order to do penance for their transgression were parted from each other, and after a separation of sixscore years, met again upon this mountain. (Ockley's "History of the Saracens," p. 60.)

MOUNT ARAFA (In Two Parts)
THE PARTING



I
RIVEN away from Eden's gate (With blazing falchions fenced about) Into a desert desolate, A miserable pair came out To meet their fate. To wander in a world of woe, To ache and starve, to burn and shiver, With every living thing their foe — The fire of God above, the river Of death below. Of home, of hope, of heaven bereft; It is the destiny of man To cower beneath his Maker's ban, And hide from his own theft.

II
The father of a world unborn — Who hath begotten death, ere life — In sullen silence plods forlorn; His love and pride in his fair wife Are rage and scorn. Instead of angel ministers, What hath he now but fiends devouring; Instead of grapes and melons, burs; In lieu of manna, crab and souring? By whose fault? Hers! Alack, good sire of feeble knees, New penance waits thee; since — when thus Thou shouldst have wept for all of us — Thou mournest thine own ease!

III
The mother of all loving wives (Condemned

unborn to many a tear) Is fain to take his hand,
and strives In sorrow to be doubly dear — But
shame deprives. The shame, the woe, the black
surprise, That love's first dream should have
such ending — To weep, and wipe neglected
eyes! Oh loss of true love, far transcending
Lost Paradise! For is it faith, that cannot live
One gloomy hour, and soar above The clouds
of fate? And is it love That will not e'en for-
give?

IV

The houseless monarch of the earth Hath quickly
found what empire means; for while he scoffs
with bitter mirth, And curses, after Eden's
scenes, This dreary dearth, A snake, that twined
in playful zeal But yester morn around his
ankle, Now driven along the dust to steal, Steals
up, and leaves its venom'd rankle Deep in his
heel. He groans awhile. He seeks anon For
comfort to this first of pain, Where all his sons
to-day are fain; He seeks — but Eve is gone!



MOUNT ARAFA Part I ADAM

O'ER hill and highland, moor and plain,
A hundred years, he seeks in vain; O'er
hill and plain, a hundred years, He pours
the sorrow no one hears; Yet finds, as
reckless mourners find, Some ease of heart
in toil of mind.

I



YE mountains, that forbid the
day, Ye glens, that are the
steps of night, How long
amidst you must I stray —
Deserted, banished from God's
sight, And cast away? Ye
trees and flowers the Lord hath
made, Ye beasts to my good will committed
— Although your trust hath been betrayed —
Not long ago ye would have pitied Your old
comrade. Oh, nature, noblest when alone!
Albeit I love your outward part; The nature
that consoles my heart Must be more like my
own.

II

“The Maker once appointed me — I know not
and I care not why — The Lord of everything I
see; Or if they walk, or swim, or fly, Whate'er
they be. And all the earth whereon they dwell,
And all the heavens they are inhaling, And
powers, whereof I cannot tell — Dark miscreants,
supine and wailing, Until I fell. 'T was good
and glorious to believe; But now my majesty

is o'er, And I would give it all, and more, For
one sweet glimpse of Eve.

III

“For what is glory? what is power? And
what the pride of standing first? A twig struck
down by a thunder-shower, A crown of thistle
to quench the thirst, A sun-scorched flower.
God grant the men who spring from me, As
knowledge waxeth deep and splendid, To find
a loftier pedigree Than any by the Lord in-
tended — Frog, slug, or tree! So shall they
live, without the grief Of having female kind to
love, Find naught below, and less above, And
be their own belief.

IV

“So weak was I, so poorly taught By any but
my Maker's voice, Too happy to indulge in
thought, Which gives me little to rejoice, And
ends in naught. But now and then my path
grows clear; My mind casts off its grim confu-
sion When I have chanced on goodly cheer;
Then happiness seems no delusion, Even down
here, With love and faith to bless the curse,
To heal the mind by touch of heart, To make
me feel my better part, And fight against the
worse.

V

“It may be that I did o'erprize, Above the Giver,
that rare gift; Ungird my will for softer ties,
And hold my manhood little thrift To woman's
eyes. So fair she was, so full of grace, So in-

nocent with coy caresses, So proud to step at my
own pace, So rosy through her golden tresses,
And such a face! Suffice my sins; I'll ne'er
approve A thought against my faithful Eve;
Suffice my sins; I'll ne'er believe That it was
one to love.

VI

“Oh love, if e'er this desert plain, Where I must
sweat with axe and spade, Shall hold a people
sprung from twain, Or better made by Him,
who made That pair in vain, Shall any know,
as we have known, Thy rapture, terror, vaunt-
ing, fretting, Profound despair, ecstatic tone,
Crowning of reason, and upsetting Of reason's
throne? Bright honey quaff'd from cells of
gall, Or crimson sting from creamy rose — Thy
heavenly half from Eden flows, Thy venom
from our fall.”

*Awhile he ceased; for scorching woe Had
made a drought of vocal flow; When hun-
gry, weary, desolate, A fox crept home to
his den's gate. The sight brought Adam's
memory back, And touched him with a
keener lack.*

VII

“Home! Where is home? Of old I thought
(Or felt in mystery of bliss) That so divinely
was I wrought As not to care for that or this,
And value naught; But sit or saunter, rest or
roam, Regarding all things most sublimely, As

if enthroned on heaven's dome; Away with
paltry and untimely Hankerings for home! But
now the weary heart is fain For shelter in some
lowly nest — To sink upon a softer breast And
smile away its pain.

VIII

“For me what home, what hope is left? What
guiding line of good or ill? Of all I ever loved
bereft, Disgraced, discarded, outlawed still For
one small theft! I sicken of my skill and pride;
I work, without a bit of caring. The world is
waste, the world is wide; Why make good
things, with no one sharing Them at my side?
What matter how I dwell or die? Away with
such a niggard life! The Lord hath robbed me
of my wife, And life is only I.

IX

“God, who hast said it is not good For man,
Thy son, to live alone; Is everlasting solitude,
When once united bliss was known, A livelier
food? Canst Thou suppose it right or just,
When Thine own creature so misled us, In vir-
tue of our simple trust, To torture us like this,
and tread us Back into dust? Oh, fool I am!
Oh, rebel worm! If, when immortal I was
slain For daring to impugn His reign, How
shall I, thus infirm?

X

“Woe me, poor me! No humbler yet, For all
the penance on me laid; Forgive me, Lord, if I
forget That I am but what Thou hast made,

My soul Thy debt! Inspire me to survey the
skies, And tremble at their golden wonder, To
learn the space that I comprise; At once to
marvel, and to ponder, And drop mine eyes.
And grant me—for I do but find, In seeking
more than God hath shown, I lose His power
and waste my own—Grant me a lowly
mind.

XI

“A lowly mind! Thou wondrous sprite,
Whose frolics make their master weep; Anon
endowed with eagle’s flight, Anon too impotent
to creep, Or blink aright; Howe’er thy trum-
pety flashes play Among the miracles above thee,
Be taught to feel thy Maker’s sway; To la-
bour, so that He shall love thee And guide thy
way; Be led, from out the cloudy dreams Of
thy too visionary part, To listen to the whisper-
ing heart, And curb thine own extremes.

XII

“Then hope shall shine from heaven, and give
To fruit of hard work sunny cheek, And flow-
ers of grace and love revive, And shrivelled
pasturage grow sleek, And corn shall thrive.
Beholding gladness, Eve and I, Enfolding it also
in each other, May talk of heaven without a
sigh; Because our heaven in one another Love
shall supply; For courage, faith and bended
knees, By stress of patience, cure distress, And
turn wild Love-in-idleness Into the true Hearts-
ease.”

The Lord breathed on the first of men, And
strung his limbs to strength again; He
scorned a century of ill, And girt his loins
to climb the parting hill.

MOUNT ARAFA Part II EVE

MEANWHILE, through lowland, holt, and glade, Sad Eve her lonely travel made; Not fierce, or proud, but well content To own the righteous punishment; Yet found, as gentle mourners find, The heart's confession soothe the mind.

I



E valleys, and ye waters vast,
Who answer all that look on
you With shadows of them-
selves, that last As long as
they, and are as true — Where
hath he passed? Oh woods,
and heights of rugged stone,
Oh weariness of sky above me! For ever must
I pine and moan, With none to comfort, none to
love me, Alone, alone? Thou bird, that hover-
est at heaven's gate, Or cleavest limpid lines of
air, Return — for thou hast one to care — Re-
turn to thy dear mate.

II

“For me, no joy of earth or sky, No commune
with the things I see, But dreary converse of the
eye With worlds too grand to look at me — No
smile, no sigh! In vain I fall upon my knees,
In vain I weep and sob for ever; All other mis-
eries have ease, All other prayers have ruth —
but never Any for these. Are we endowed
with heavenly breath, And God's own form,
that we should win A proud priority of sin,
And teach creation death?”

III

“Nay, that is too profound for me, Too lofty for a fallen thing; More keenly do I feel than see, Far liefer would I, than take wing, Beneath it be. The night—the dark—will soon be here, The gloom that doth my heart appall so; How can I tell what may be near? My faith is in the Lord—but also He hath made fear. I quail, I cower, I strive to flee; Though oft I watched, without affright, The stern magnificence of night, When Adam was with me.

IV

“My husband! Ah, I thought sometime That I could do without him well, Communing with the heaven at prime, And in my womanhood could dwell Calm and sublime. Declining, with a playful strife, All thoughts below my own transcendence, All common-sense of earth and life, And counting it a poor dependence To be his wife. But now I know, by trouble’s test, How little my poor strength can bear. What folly wisdom is, whene’er The grief is in the breast!

V

“The grief is in my breast, because I have not always been as kind As woman should, by nature’s laws; But showed sometimes a wilful mind, Carping at straws. While he, perhaps, with larger eyne, Was pleased, instead of vexed, at seeing Some little petulance in mine, And loved me all the more, for being Not too divine; Until the pride became a snare; The reason a

deceit, wherein I dallied face to face with sin,
And made a mortal pair.

VI

“Dark sin, the deadly foe of love, All bowers of
bliss thou shalt infest, Implanting thorns the
flowers above, And one black feather in the
breast Of purest dove. Almighty Father, once
our Friend, And ready even now to love us,
Thy pitying gaze upon us bend, And through
the tempest-clouds above us Thine arm extend;
That so Thy children may begin, In lieu of bliss,
to earn content, And find that sinful Eve was
meant Not only for a sin.”

*Awhile she ceased; for memory's flow Had
drowned the utterance of woe; Until a
young hind crossed the lawn, And fondly
trotted forth her fawn, Whose frolics of
delight made Eve, As in a weeping vision,
grieve.*

VII

“For me, poor me, no hope to learn That
sweeter bliss than Paradise, The joy that makes
a mother yearn O'er that bright message from
the skies, Her pains do earn. She stoops en-
tranced; she fears to stir, Or think; lest e'en a
thought endanger (While two enraptured hearts
confer) That wonderful and wondering stranger,
Come home to her. He watches her, in sol-
emn style; A world of love flows to and fro;
He smiles, that he may learn to know His
mother, by her smile.

VIII

“Oh bliss, that to all other bliss Shall be as
sunrise unto night, Or heaven to such a place
as this, Or God’s own voice, with angels bright,
To serpent’s hiss! Have I betrayed thee, or
cast by The pledge in which my soul delighted,
That all this wrong and misery Should be
avenged at last, and righted, And so should I?
Belike, they look on me as dead, Those fiends
that found me soft and sweet; But God hath
promised me one treat — To crush that serpent’s
head!

IX

“Revenge! Oh, heaven, let some one rise —
Some woman, since revenge is small — Who
shall not care about its size, If only she can get
it all, For those black lies! Poor Adam is too
good and great — I felt it, though he said so
little — To hate his foes as I can hate, And pay
them every jot and tittle At their own rate; For
was there none but I to blame? God knows
that if, instead of me, There had been any other
she, She would have done the same.

X

“Poor me! Of course, the whole disgrace, In
spite of reason, falls on me; And so all women
of my race, In pure right, shall be reason-free In
every case. It shall not be in power of man
To bind them to their own contentions; But
each shall speak, as speak she can, And start
anew, with fresh inventions, Where she began.

And so shall they be dearer still ; For man shall
ne'er suspect in them The plucking of the fatal
stem, That brought him all his ill.

XI

“ And when hereafter — as there must, Since
He, that made us, so hath sworn, From that
whereof we are, the dust, And whereunto we
shall return In higher trust — There spring a
grand and countless race, Replenishing this vast
possession, Till life hath won a larger space
Than death, by quick and fair succession
Of health and grace ; They too shall find, as I
have found, The grief, that lifts its head on
high A dewy bud the sun shall dry — But not
while on the ground.

XII

“ Then men shall love their wives again, Allow-
ing for the frailer kind ; Content to keep the
heart's Amen, Content to own the turns of
mind Beyond their ken. And wives shall in
their lords be blest, Their higher sense of right
perceiving (When possible) with love their test ;
Exalting, solacing, believing All for the best.
And for the best shall all things be If God once
more will shine around, And lift my husband
from the ground, And teach him to lift me.”

*New faith inspired the first of wives, She
smiles, and drooping hope revives ; She
scorns a hundred years of woe, And binds
her hair, because the breezes blow.*

MOUNT ARAFA THE MEETING

I

THE wind is hushed, the moon is bright, More stars on heaven than may be told; Young flowers are coy with the light That softly tempts them to unfold And trust the night. What form comes bounding from above Down Arafa, the mountain lonely, Afraid to scare its long-lost dove, Yet swift as joy — “It can be only, Only my love!” What shape is that — too fair to leave On Arafa, the mountain lone? So trembling, and so faint — “My own, It must be my own Eve!”

II

As when the mantled heavens display The glory of the morning glow, And spread the mountain heights with day, And bid the clouds and shadows go Trooping away — The spirit of the Lord arose, And made the earth and heavens to quiver, And scattered all His hellish foes, And deigned His good stock to deliver From all their woes. So long the twain had strayed apart That each, as at a marvel, gazed With eyes abashed, and brain amazed, While heart inquired of heart.

III

Our God hath made a fairer thing Than fairest

dawn of summer day — A gentle, timid, fluttering, Confessing glance, that seeks alway Rest for its wing — A sweeter sight than azure skies, Or golden star thereon that glideth; And blest are they who see it rise, For if it cometh, it abideth, In woman's eyes. The first of men such blessing sued; The first of women smiled consent; For husband, wife, and home it meant, And no more solitude!

IV

We trample now the faith of old, We make our Gods of dream and doubt; Yet life is but a tale untold, Without one heart to love, without One hand to hold. The fairer half of humankind — More gentle, playful, and confiding; Whose soul is not the slave of mind, Whose spirit hath a nobler guiding Than we can find; So Eve restores the sweeter part Of what herself unwitting stole, And makes the wounded Adam whole; For half the mind is heart.



THE WELL OF SAINT JOHN

The old well of Saint John, in the parish of Newton-Nottage, Glamorganshire, has a tide of its own, which appears to run exactly counter to that of the sea, some half-mile away. The water is beautifully bright and fresh; and the quaint dome among the lonely sands is regarded with some awe and reverence.

THE WELL OF SAINT JOHN

He.



HERE is plenty of room for two in here, Within the steep tunnel of old gray stone; And the well is so deep, and the spring so clear, It is quite unsafe to go down alone."

She.

"It is perfectly safe, depend upon it, For a girl who can count the steps, like me; And if ever I saw dear Mother's bonnet, It is there on the hill by the old ash-tree."

He.

"There is nobody but Rees Hopkin's cow Watching the dusk on the milk-white sea; 'T is the time and the place for a life-long vow, Such as I owe you, and you owe me."

She.

"Oh, Willie, how can I, in this dark well? I shall drop the brown pitcher, if you let go; The long roof is murmuring like a sea-shell, And the shadows are shuddering to and fro!"

He.

"'T is the sound of the ebb in Newton Bay Quickens the spring as the tide grows less; Even as true love flows alway Counter the flood of the world's success."

She.

“There is no other way for love to flow, Whenever it springs in a woman’s breast; With the tide of its own heart it must go, And run contrary to all the rest.”

He.

“Then fill the sweet cup of your hand, my love, And pledge me your maiden faith thereon, By the touch of the lettered stone above And the holy water of Saint John.”

She.

“Oh, what shall I say? My heart sinks low; My fingers are cold, and my hand too flat; Is love to be measured by handfuls so? And you know that I love you — without that.”

They stooped, in the gleam of the faint light, over The print of themselves in the limpid gloom; And she lifted her full palm towards her lover, With her lips preparing the words of doom. But the warm heart rose, and the cold hand fell, And the pledge of her faith sprang sweet and clear, From a holier source than the old Saint’s well, From the depth of a woman’s love — a tear.

BUSCOMBE

BUSCOMBE; OR, A MICHAELMAS GOOSE

WHEN I was Head of Blundell's school, Before the age of stokers, Compelled by rank to look a fool Betwixt a pair of "chokers," Tom Tanner's father wrote, to say That we should both of us come To spend Saint Michael's holiday At the Vicarage of Buscombe. One trifle marred this merry plan — I had contrived, though bar'd up, To typify the future man By getting very hard up. O Bi-metallic Champion! some New Ratio doth seem proper, When the circulating medium Is reduced to half a copper. Vile Mammon hence! Thy low amount Too paltry is to mope for; The more we have in hand to count, The less in heart to hope for. Bright youth itself is golden ore, And health the best gold-beater; Without a sigh for twopence more, We passed the gates of Peter. A nod suffices surly Cop, Who grins his bona fides, As Cerberus preferred his sop To Orpheus and Alcides. But Mother Cop! her cooking knack Would conquer fifty Catos — The Queen of tarts, and tuck, and tack, And cream, and fried potatoes. And rashers! Sweet Ulysses, say Old Homer was mistaken; The goddess must have had her way, And turned thee into bacon.

That Circe came, and wished us joy, And said,
"Good-bye, my dearie!" Because I was an
honest boy, And pauper meo aere. So Tom
and I, like men on strike, Shook hands with all
our cronies, Walked fifty yards, to save the pike,
And jumped upon our ponies. Of apples, nuts,
and goose galore I chattered like a stupid, And
thought of shooting conies, more Than being
shot by Cupid.

At racing pace the turnpike road (Great West-
ern, in this quicker age) Was swallowed up with
whip and goad, And soon we saw the Vicarage.
A sweet seclusion, to forget The world and its
disasters, And fill the mind with mignonette,
Clove-pinks, and German asters; In pensive or
in playful mood To saunter here, and dally With
leafy calm of solitude, Or sunshine of the valley.
The Vicar loved his parish well, And well was
he loved by it; Religion did not him compel To
harass and defy it. No price he charged for
heavenly love, No discount on Resurgo; His
conscience told him one side-shove Is worth ten
kicks a tergo. But while the way of peace he
showed Unto the Christian guerdon, No post
was he, to point the road, But a man to share
the burden. The lapse of years made manifest
The sanctuary of holy age, As clearer grows
the ring-dove's nest, When time hath stripped
the foliage. The Vicar's wife was much the
same, In fairer form presented — A lively, yet a

quiet dame, With home, sweet home, contented ;
In parish wants, and household arts, A lesson to
this glib age ; Well versed in pickles, jams and
tarts, Piano, chess, and cribbage. And well she
loved the flowers, that speak A language unde-
filed — The flowers, that lift the dimpled cheek,
Or droop the dewy eyelid.

Now, if she lingers after us, What ground
have we for snarling ? What Act prohibits pri-
vate buss, Reserved for “ Tommy darling ” ?

But who are these, so fresh and sweet In
lovely hats and dresses, Who half advance, and
half retreat, And peep through clouds of tresses ?
“ Come, dears ! ” They shyly offer hand, Be-
neath the jasmine trellis ; “ Say who you are,
girls ; ” — Charlotte, and Her sister, Caroline
Ellis ! Sweet Charlotte hath a serious face — A
gaze almost parental ; A type of every maiden
grace, But a wee bit sentimental. Bright Caro-
line hath eyes that dance, While buoyant airs
engirdle her ; Her playful soul may love ro-
mance, But not a creepy curdler. Sweet Char-
lotte’s are the deep gray eyes That win profound
devotion ; Bright Carry’s flash, like azure skies
With heliograph in motion. As merry as the
vintage ray That dances down the grape-rill ;
As tender as the dews of May, Or apple buds
of April. Their charms are safe to grow more
bright For at least two lustral stages ; And so it

seems not unpolite To enquire what their age is.
"Last May I was fifteen," with glee Replies the
laughing Carry; Sage Charlotte adds, "And I
shall be Seventeen, next February." To the
dining-room we walk on air, Disdaining jots
and tittles; To feed seems such a low affair —
And yet, hurrah for victuals! Can e'en a boy
ply knife and fork In presence so poetic, Until
the Vicar draws a cork, And gives the sniff
prophetic? And when the evening games be-
gan, Pope Joan, and Speculation, What head
could keep its poise, and plan With the heart in
palpitation? Until, in soft white-curtained bed,
We sink to slumber lowly, And angels fan the
childish head, With visions sweet and holy.

"Now, I do declare," exclaimed our host, As he
strode back from the arish, "Those Railroad
fellows soon will boast They have undermined
my parish. Though none can say I have ever
set My face against improvement, I cannot quite
perceive as yet The good of this new move-
ment. Like Hannibal, these folk confound All
nature's institutions, And shun, with a great
dive underground, Parochial contributions.
Come, boys and girls, let us see their craft,
These hills of Devon will task it; 'T is a pretty
walk to White-Ball shaft, If the boys will take
a basket. Dear wife, if your poor feet are right,
The miracles of this cycle Will give you a noble
appetite For the roast goose of Saint Michael."

In a twinkle, we had baskets twain Of the right stuff for a journey, And beautiful gooseberry Champagne, Superior to Epernay.

What myriad joys of heart and mind Flit in and out our brief age! That day it was grand to see how kind The sun looked through the leafage. Can the heart of man alone be dull, Or the mind of man be spiteful, When all above is beautiful, And all below delightful? When Season bright, and Season rich Make bids against each other, And earth uncertain which is which Smiles up at Nature mother. The copse, the lane, the meadow path, The valleys, banks, and hedges Were green with summer's after-math, And gold with autumn's pledges. Wild rose hung coral beads above, And satchel'd nuts grew nigh them, Like tips of a little maiden's glove, Ere ever she has to buy them. But ours are not the maids to bite A gore or gusset undone; How neat they look, how trim and tight! Those frocks were made in London. Long time we glance in awe and doubt, Suppressing all frivolity; Till the spirit of the age breaks out, And all is mirth and jollity. One flash, that stole from eyes demure, Hath scattered all convention; And then a pearly laugh makes sure That fun is her intention. The smiling elders march ahead; We dance, without a fiddler, We play at cross-touch, white and red, Tip-cat, and Tommy Tidler. We

laugh and shout much more than speak; No
etiquette importunes; The trees were made for
hide-and-peek, The flowers to tell our fortunes;
The hills for pretty girls to pant And glow with
richer roses; The wind itself to toss askant The
curls that hide their noses. Then sprightly
Carry shouts in French, "All boys and girls,
come nutting!" We are slipping down a
mighty trench—Why, it is the railway cutting!
Before us yawns a dark-browed arch, Paved
with a muddy runnel; A thousand giant nav-
vies march, To delve the White-Ball tunnel.
Now, if a man of them but did Presume to
glance at Carry, Though he were Milo, or
John Ridd, I would toss him to Old Harry.
I pull my jacket off, like him Who would
shatter England's pillars— From the tunnel
comes an order grim, "Get out the way, you
chil'lers!"

And the same stern order doth apply To the
pranks of this remote age; We are sure alike to
be thrust by In our nonage and our dotage.
Yet who shall grudge the tranquil age When
naught can now betide ill, To glance, from a
distant hermitage, At a summer morning idyll?

Oh, agony, despair, and woe! Oh, two-edged
sword to us come! To Blundell's must the
body go, While the heart remains at Buscombe.
All breakfast time, how glum we looked; Our

tears were threatening dribblets; Too truly had our goose been cooked, To leave us e'en the giblets. Sweet Charlotte, did you share the thrill, The pang no throat may utter, And strive an aching void to fill With heartless toast and butter? And were you sad, bright Caroline, Although you never said so? You did cast down your lovely eyne, And you crumbled up your bread so! But the Vicar's views were more sublime, As he asked, in all simplicity, "My youthful friends, what is the prime Of all mundane felicity?" My answer, though it sounded cool, Was given with trepidation—"To stay at home, and send to school The rising generation." A gentle smile flits o'er his lip, He eyes me with benignity; He yearns to offer goodly tip, Yet fears to wound my dignity. True benefactor, be not shy, Thou seest a humble fellow; Thy noble impulse gratify—My stars! if it is n't yellow!

But time is over, and above, To end this charming visit; And must we part, my own true love? Though I am not sure which is it. Sweet Charlotte lingered in the shade, Most gentle of all houris; Bright Carry in the lobby played With a pair of polished cowries. She showed me how alike they were, So heaven had pleased to mate them; Though fortune might divide the pair, She ne'er could separate them. I blushed and stammered at her touch; I feared

to beg for either ; My heart was in my mouth
so much I could say " Good-bye " to neither.

Two strings are wise for every bow, To meet
the change of weather ; And Cupid's shafts give
softer blow When two are tied together. Oh
Charlotte sweet, and Carry bright, My whole,
or double-half love, Let no maturer wisdom
slight A simple tale of calf-love. A blessing on
the maiden grace That beautifies the real, To
make the world a fairer place, And lift the low
ideal. If one, or both, by any chance, Espy
what I confess here, Make auld lang syne of
young romance By sending your address here.
And answer — as I trust you can, When time is
flying faster, That he hath served you better
than Your humble poetaster.

POSTSCRIPT (A Fact)

This have they done — and oh, by Jove, Not altered by a fraction; If then they were too sweet to love, What are they now? Distraction. Of course, they must be ever young; How could I be so stupid? Time fell in love with both, and flung His calendar to Cupid.

EPILOGUE

TO FAME (1894)

B

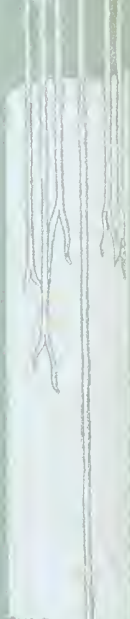
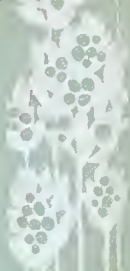
I RIGHT Fairy of the morn,
with flowers arrayed,
Whose beauties to thy
young pursuer seem Be-
yond the ecstasy of poet's
dream — Shall I o'ertake
thee ere thy lustre fade ?

II
Ripe glory of the noon,
august and proud, A vision of high purpose,
power, and skill, Dissolving into mirage of
good-will — Do I o'ertake thee, or embrace a
cloud ?

III
Gray shadow of the evening, gaunt and bare,
At random cast, beyond me or above, And cold
as memory in the arms of love — If I o'ertook
thee now, what should I care ?

IV
“No morn, or noon, or eve, am I,” she said,
“But night — the depth of night behind the sun,
By all mankind pursued ; but never won, Until
my shadow falls upon a shade.”





BRADLEY



ERINGILLA

or Tales in Verse by
Richard Doddridge Blackmore
M.A. Oxon
with sundry Decorative
Picturings by
Will. H. Bradley